

REMARKS

Claims 21 and 25-32 are pending in the application.

Claims 21, 25, 26 and 28-32 have been allowed.

Claim 27 has been rejected.

Claim 27 has been canceled, without prejudice.

I. **REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112**

Claim 27 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicant notes that Claim 27 has been pending in this application and has been previously examined on several occasions, and that this rejection is a matter of first impression. Nonetheless, Applicant has canceled Claim 27, without prejudice, and requests withdrawal of the § 112 rejection.

II. **REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102**

Claim 27 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Gossett Dalton, Jr. (US 6,426,955). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicant notes that the Office Action states that the indicated allowability of Claim 27 is being withdrawn in view of “the newly discovered reference(s) to Salema et al (U.S. Patent

5,584,093 B1) and Alfonsi, et al (U.S. Patent 5,491,690.” Office Action, page 2.¹ However, the specific rejection refers to Gossett Dalton Jr. (US 6,426,955) as the basis for the 102 rejection.

Regardless, Applicant has canceled Claim 27, without prejudice, and respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw the § 102(e) rejection of Claim 27.

III. CONCLUSION

As a result of the foregoing, the Applicant asserts that the remaining Claims in the Application are in condition for allowance, and respectfully requests an early allowance of such Claims.

¹ Applicant further notes that Salema is US Patent 6,584,093 having a 102(e) date of January 5, 1999 (which is after Applicant’s filing date of December 28, 1998); however, the Salema reference claims priority to a provisional application having a filing date of August 25, 1998.

If any issues arise, or if the Examiner has any suggestions for expediting allowance of this Application, the Applicant respectfully invites the Examiner to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below or at *rmccutcheon@davismunck.com*.

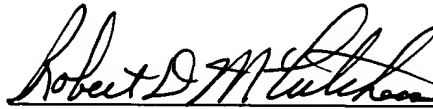
The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees connected with this communication or credit any overpayment to Davis Munck Deposit Account No. 50-0208.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: _____

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